Come and spread your arms if you really need a hug

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Come and spread your arms if you really need a hug

by LexiconOfTheOcean_00

Summary

And then, it was just the four of them.

Same as it always was.

(But it wasn't the same, and they all feared it would never be.)

Or: The turtles deal with the aftermath of Superfly

Done for the Mutant Mayhem Gift Exchange on Tumblr!!

Notes

This fic was written for Tumblr's MM Gift Exchange!

I wrote it for Jackie AKA 5t4r5and5uch01 who requested the turtle bros taking care of each post Superfly!!!!! I hope you enjoy this, and happy new year!!!! ヽ(｡>‿<｡)ノ💙❤️🧡💜

See the end of the work for more notes

"Are you sure you'll be alright, boys?"

Splinter's concerned voice seemed to break through the haze that had settled itself around Michelangelo. He blinked a couple of times, his eyes slowly focusing on the concrete floor of his room, broken by the amount of clutter he and his brother carelessly threw around. He was still stuck rebooting, trying to remember how to form words, when Leo spoke.

"We'll be fine dad, right guys?" The oldest turned to his brothers, Donnie and Raph making noises of agreement, while Mikey could only nod jerkily. He... actually wasn't sure if they'll be alright, considering everything that had just happened (*his shell hurt, his head throbbed, he still felt sluggish and tired and out of it, all reminders of the hell he and his brothers endured just a few hours ago-*), but Leo said they would be, and he was their leader, and also a terrible liar. And also their older brother. If anyone other than dad could keep the night terrors away, that would be Leo, and his inherent calming aura.

"Very well then..." Splinter seemed unconvinced, adjusting his glasses as if that would reveal all of his sons' secrets to him. "Shout if you need anything, okay?" He moved as if to pat Leo's shell, but stopped himself, moving to his child's shoulder. "Have a good night," he said gently, repeating the action for all of his boys.

Mikey found himself slightly leaning into the warm touch his father provided, hating when it went away what he felt was too quickly. The rat walked out, closing the curtain with one final "I love you," that the turtles echoed back at him.

And then, it was just the four of them.

Same as it always was.

(But it wasn't the same, and they all feared it would never be.)

The silence was broken by a long, *long* sigh. "Welp," Raph started, "what a day, huh?"

"Don't even talk to me," Donnie deadpanned, walking straight into his bed, "I'm gonna zip this tent up and not come out in *at least* two- no, *three* weeks!"

"'Kay, have fun," Raph called out after him, voice light and teasing. It was so... normal, it undid some of the heaviness the teenagers were carrying with them since they walked into the lair.

(*Since they stood together under the sun, basking in their glory, until Mikey stumbled forward, cracked shell out in the open for all to see, and reality came crashing down around them*.)

A hand pressed up against Mikey's shoulder, nearly exactly where his dad's had been, softly breaking him out of his trance.

He turned, eyes slowly travelling up from the three fingers, to the bright blue wrist guard, through the arm decorated with more blue; until he meet Leo's huge, concerned eyes.

"Quit staring at me with 'em big ol' eyes," the youngest drawled, his verbal filter non-existent, "wet cat lookin' ass."

Leo frowned, huffing. But his mouth still held a smile, and his huff had notes of laughter intertwined with his breath. "I was about to ask if you were okay, but it seems you are, so."

"You sound high," Raph commented, turning to their bunk bed.

"It's probably the adrenaline crash," Donnie piped up from inside his zipped-up tent. *Wait, when did he close it?*. "Usually happens after... huh... panic attacks, and stuff..."

Right. Mikey had nearly forgotten he had one of those.

Leo took a deep breath, "You sure you're good?"

Mikey nodded, "Lemme just..." he turned to their brother in red, "Raph, can I have the bottom bunk for the night?"

Raph sputtered, "Wha- why?"

The youngest shrugged, "Don't wanna climb."

"Mikey..."

"Raph," the orange clad turtle put on his best puppy eyes, "*pleaseeeeee*-?"

"Okay, alright, fine!" Raph surrendered, while the oldest snickered in the background, "and you were complaining about Leo's big ass eyes..."

"Hey! My eyes aren't that big!" Leo tried to defend himself, while Mikey ignored the upcoming argument in favor of crawling into bed.

He did miss his glow-in-the-dark stars, but Raph could have them for now. He'll make do with his heavy quilt and soft, soft pillow.

He let the familiar sound of lighthearted arguing and keyboard tapping lull him to sleep.

///

Yeah, he wasn't asleep for long.

He tried keeping his eyes closed. He tried counting sheep. He *would've* tried rolling around in bed until he found the perfect sleeping pose, but his shell ached so bad that the mere idea of *moving* made him want to cry.

Maybe he could try crying himself to sleep. He was seriously considering it, but a loud snore from Raph reminded him he wasn't alone. He wasn't exactly a silent crier.

As he tried to come up with other ways to fall asleep, a sigh from the opposite side of the room distracted him. "Donnie? You up?"

Beat of silence.

Then, the tent opened slightly, Donnie's glassless eyes peeking through. "Hey."

"'Sup," Mikey answered. "Can't sleep?"

The tent was opened the rest of the way, "Nope."

"Me neither."

"I noticed."

The two youngest brothers stared at each other. Both laying on their plastrons, one of Mikey's arms was hanging from the border of the bed, lazily swinging back and forth, while Donnie stood still, arms tucked underneath him, borderline cat-like.

Mikey decided to say that last part out loud, "You loafin'?"

Donnie hummed, "You tryin' to reach the ground?"

Mikey gazed down at his arm, movement slowing but not stopping, "Would you believe me if I told you I didn't realize I was doing this?"

Donnie hummed once again, shrugging to the best of his ability.

Silence settled.

"So..." Donnie dragged the 'o' as he spoke, "are we gonna talk about how fucked up that was? Because all of that was very fucked up."

"Be a bit more specific?" Mikey asked. Donnie squinted at him. "Like, what was fucked up? Having to hide our whole lives? Getting the shit beat out of us by our kaiju-mutant-cousin? Nearly being milked to death?"

The bitterness on the other's voice shocked Donnie to his core. "Mikey-"

"I really thought I was gonna die, Donnie," Mikey interrupted. Donnie stayed quiet, still. "Like- When I was being milked, I mean. It hurt so fucking bad, I was thinking to myself, 'this is it, this is where it ends for Michael Angelo'. Never had frozen yogurt, never went to school, never got to share his top tier humor with the world. Dead at fifteen, killed in front of his brothers by some giraffe lookin' lady, fucking *milked to death*-"

A snort from above him broke him out of his spiral, "Imagine *that* written in your grave, confuse the fuck outta some humans."

Mikey blinked rapidly, tears falling at the action, "Raph?"

His brother's face appeared from the upper corner of the bed, mask tails hanging. "Damn bitch, you live like this?" The tone was light, but his older brother's face was pulled tight, a

shadow of worry and concern looming over his features, making Mikey's stomach twist with guilt.

"Raph," the bulkier turtle raised his head slightly, meeting Donnie's gaze, "how long have you been awake?"

"Long enough," he answered, bringing his head back down to look over Mikey. He pointed at him, accusatory, "You told Leo you were okay, you lying cunt."

Mikey, like any self respecting younger brother, retaliated by snapping his jaws at Raph's finger, threatening to bite him.

Ninja reflexes meant he didn't succeed, but the intent was there all the same. "Why are you awake anyway?" Mikey asked casually, as if he didn't just try to attack the other.

"Thirsty," is everything Raph said, disappearing into his bunk briefly before going down. "I'm bringing y'all some water too."

Mikey regarded him with a raised brow, "'Kay?"

"That's a threat," he informed the younger two.

Donnie rolled his eyes, "Sure it is."

Raph stood briefly over his tent, "What happened to zipping the tent and not coming out in three weeks?" He questioned, "I was looking forward to not having to see your nerd emoji lookin' face."

Donnie reached to his side, "This pillow is about to be a threat."

Raph scurried off.

Mikey giggled lightly at their antics. Once again, it almost felt normal.

Almost.

"...Did you seriously think you were going to die?" Donnie asked quietly, nails digging into the pillow he had used to intimidate Raph.

"I mean, I guess?" Mikey looked away, "weird to think about *now*, but like..."

He left those words to hang in the air.

Donnie stood up, limping his way to his brother, the present getting superimposed with the past, *when Donnie called out for him in the middle of hell, fire cracking everywhere, walking slow too slow, and a car was flung his way, and Mikey was frozen in place, and he could only scream-*

He was brought back by the dull sound of his brother sitting on the ground, next to his bed. It didn't take long for Donnie to wrap himself around his still-hanging arm, like a koala.

"Donnie..?"

He seemed to be looking far, far away. "I didn't think we would *die* there," he began, voice low, "that... jar, or whatever it was, it was *huge*, I was thinking like, well *obviously* she's gonna keep us alive until we fill the whole thing. Trapped, and in pain, but alive."

Mikey made a face, "That's worse. Y'know that's worse, right?"

Donnie just hummed. "When... when Superfly... when he *grabbed us*," he squeezed Mikey's arm, bringing him closer the edge of the bed, "when he cracked our shells, that's when… when... when I thought... we... we..."

"...We?" Mikey prompted.

Donnie didn't answer.

"...Donnie?" Mikey maneuvered his way out of the bed, trying to be on eye level with his brother. "Hey, Donnie, you with me?"

The answer, clearly, was no.

Donnie was there, in that moment where he thought he was going to end. *Squeezed to death by a giant mutant, that was a cool way to go out, right?*

(Mikey kept calling out to him, his voice gaining desperation, but it wasn't enough to break through the fog of memories.)

It just sucked that his brothers would go out with him. It just sucked he wasn't going to see BTS IRL. It just sucked that the few online friends he had would think he just ghosted them.

It just sucked, that he was going to die before he truly got to live.

(Mikey switched tactics, trying to talk about every anime he knew Donnie was into. But his knowledge was limited, and nothing he said could catch Donnie's attention.)

His lungs burned, his shell hurt, his eyes stung with unshed tears. He wasn't going to cry, wasn't going to break down and beg for mercy from the monster before him, from the red eyes that seemed to be drinking in his suffering.

He wasn't going to break, unlike his shell.

But he <u>was</u> going to die. He was going to die. ***He was going to die. HE WAS GOING TO-***

"According to all known laws of aviation, there is no way a bee should be able to fly."

...Wait, what?

Donnie's eyes snapped open (when did he close them?), his mind scrambling in recognition of the words-

"Its wings are too small to get its fat little body off the ground..."

-And the voice that was reciting them, easy as breathing.

"Mikey, what the *fuck*..."

"Donnie!" Mikey cut his rambling off, pushing the other off his arm to properly look him over, "are you back? You were kinda freaking me out, man..."

"Y-yeah, I'm back, I'm good, I'm-" He regarded Mikey with a bewildered look, "...was that the Bee Movie script?"

Mikey, at least, had the decency to look sheepish, "I mean, it worked?"

Donnie blinked at him, "Why... no, wait, how-?!" His eyes got bigger, realization sinking in, "You have it *memorized?!*"

"Well..." Mikey looked everywhere, ignoring the turtle in front of him.

Donnie gawked at him...

...And then, he let go of a triumphant laugh, "I *knew* you unironically liked that movie!"

"What?!" Mikey cried out, "No, I don't! Shut up!"

Despite his attempts, Donnie just continued to laugh, doubling over as he wheezed. And Mikey... well, he was the type of guy who couldn't keep a straight face if someone else was laughing.

Soon enough, both brothers were holding each other for support, trying to avoid falling onto their sides as laughter wrecked their bodies.

That's how Raph found them, when he walked into the room carrying four water bottles. "Huh, what's so funny?"

Donnie turned, "Raph! You'll never believe-" he interrupted himself with a giggle, "Mikey knows the whole Bee Movie script!"

"What?!" Raph turned to Mikey, eyes narrowed. The other snickered, giving him a smug look. "No shot," he challenged.

Mikey took a deep breath.

"Oh no," Donnie squeaked out.

"*Accordingtoallknownlawsofaviation,thereisnowayabeeshouldbeabletofly.Itswingsaretoosmalltogetitsfatlittlebodyofftheground.Thebee,ofcourse,fliesanywaybecausebeesdon'tcarewhathumansthinkisimpossible.Yellow,black.Yellow,black.Yellow,black.Yellow,black.Ooh,blackandyellow!Let'sshakeitupalittle.Barry!Breakfastisready!Coming!Hangonasecond.Hello?Barry?Adam?Canyoubelievethisishappening?Ican't.I'llpickyouup.Lookingsharp-*"

"Ow!"

Mikey interrupted his monologuing, glancing over at Donnie, who was glancing over at Raph in turn.

The oldest was grinning, a water bottle by his feet as he meet the youngers' gazes, "Okay, I believe you," he said simply, before kicking the water bottle straight into Mikey.

Mikey grabbed it before it hit him, only then noticing the bottle by Donnie's side, "He got you?"

"Right on the shell," Donnie commented, frowning even as he grabbed the bottle. "Jackass."

Raph's face fell, from cocky to guilt, "Oh shit, for real? I didn't mean to Donnie, I swear- Woah!"

Again, ninja reflexes were the only thing saving Raph, as he avoided the pillow Donnie threw at him.

Naturally, Donnie and Mikey laughed at him, "Hey, quiet!" Raph hissed, "You're gonna wake up Leo!"

"Nngh... N-no..."

Raph glared at the pair, "See?!" Despite that, the two kept snickering, even as Raph turned around to check on their oldest. "Leo? You up?"

"...Leo?"

His voice had changed, minutely, but so obvious to his brothers' ears.

The two shared a look. "What's wrong?" Mikey asked, frowning.

Unexpectedly, it was Leo who answered.

"N-no... stop... p-please..."

Donnie stood up, "Leo?"

Leo...

Chirped.

The three awake turtles exchanged glances.

Shocked, concerned, scared eyes meet one another.

Then, in an instant, the two younger ones where standing next to Raph, glancing down at their oldest. "Is he okay?!" Mikey asked, voice high with fear.

"Physically, he looks fine," Donnie said analytically, his eyes scanning over his brother.

Another chirp, this time followed by a click and more pleas, made them all jump.

"I-I think he's having a nightmare?" Raph suggested, "Should we wake him?"

"No!" Mikey exclaimed, "you don't wake up someone from a nightmare!"

"Well, why not?!" Raph demanded to know.

"Because you'll scare him further!" Donnie cried out. Another distressed click followed his words. "We- we need to find a way to calm him down!"

"Well, how?!"

"I don't know!"

"Maybe making quiet noises-?"

"Mikey, that never works-!"

Leo sat up.

It was so unexpected, so *sudden*, that it made the other three jump back, Raph's hands raising as fists automatically.

Leo just... stayed there. He was far from still, his chest heaving, hands trembling, eyes darting around, unfocused, before landing on the other turtles.

This time, it was Leo's turn to jump. Out of all things he expected to wake up to, his brothers standing completely still over his bed wasn't on the list.

They stared at each other, air growing heavy.

Finally, Leo spoke, "...Are you gonna tell me you three threw up, or something?"

Raph dropped his fists, rolling his eyes, "You're not our mom, Leo."

"I mean, he acts like it," Donnie pointed out, earning himself a glare from Raph.

Leo rubbed his face, chuckling, "'S hard to be a single mom when you're a teenager with no kids."

"Damn, that's rough," Mikey agreed. Then, his face became serious, "You good?"

Leo tried to smile, "Yeah, I'm great! Just peachy!"

His brothers gave him *that* look.

That look that meant that he wasn't fooling anyone.

His breathing stuttered.

He wasn't supposed to worry them.

And, much to his horror, his little brother's faces just became more worried as the seconds ticked by.

"Leo..." Raph spoke, quietly, too quiet, *when was Raph ever quiet?*.

The oldest kept his smile, even if he felt it wobbling, "Yeah? What's up?"

"You're crying."

"What? No I'm..." a drop impacted against his hand, and suddenly, Leo was *aware*, aware of the itchiness in his eyes, the wetness of his cheeks, the salt flavor in his mouth, "...not."

His brothers kept staring at him.

He just kept his eyes glued to the floor.

Finally, Raph sighed, "You lying cunt."

Leo blinked, "Huh?"

"We know you were having a nightmare," Mikey said quickly, "it was so bad, you were chirping and stuff."

"I was *what*-"

"Leo," Donnie cut him off, "what's wrong?"

Leo stared at him as if he had grown a second hand.

What's wrong?, he asked, he *dared* to ask, when beige band aids covered odd sections of his body that glass had cut, when his skin was more purple than green thanks to Superfly, when his wrists were still irritated after being shocked for merely *talking*.

What's wrong?, he asked, when Raph's hands were bandaged after he stabbed a giant screen trying to not pummel to the ground, when his skin was reddened in places after being caught in an explosion, when his eyes held a fear that felt just *wrong* in the impulsive brother's face.

What's wrong?, he asked, when Mikey had *two* black eyes and a concussion to match, when he was milked so much he passed out the second the adrenaline washed out, when a kind human nurse holding his head to check him over reminded him *so much* of *that* human lady that hurt him, that it triggered a panic attack.

What's wrong?, he asked, when they were all hurt and scared and in pain and it-

It was his fault.

He tried to say it out loud, but the words died in his throat, its corpses transforming, coming out as sobs.

Loud, undignified, heart-wrenching *sobs*.

"Leo-"

They reached out for him.

He didn't deserve it, and yet, he jumped to meet them.

His arms wrapped around them, trying to keep them close and secure *now* the way he couldn't do *before*, and he found three pairs of arms wrapping him in turn, three voices overlapping in words of confused comfort.

He shouldn't be worrying them. He was the oldest, the leader; he was *supposed* to be the one that comforted *them*, not the other way around. But still, he couldn't deny how... nice it felt, to have his brothers support him like this.

...Literally support him, he realized, taking in the fact that he was halfway out of his bed, his plastron hovering above the ground, his brothers' arms being the only thing keeping him from crashing down.

He took a deep, stuttery breath, releasing it slowly, trying to dampen the cries that still threatened to spill out of him.

He pushed himself back, away from his brothers and into his bed, even though he wanted nothing more than to stay in that hug until all the fear and guilt washed away.

He rubbed a hand against his face, trying to wipe away the saltwater sticking to his scales. He could feel three pairs of eyes on him, watching his every move, and he sighed, letting his hand drop against the comforter. "I'm... sorry you had to see that," he winced, “that was embarrassing."

His brothers blinked at him, owlishly.

"You did *not*," Donnie began, riled up, "refer to *a whole ass breakdown* as embarrassing."

Leo fidgeted, "I mean-"

"Shut the *fuck up*," Raph cut him off, before none-too-gently shoving a water bottle to his hands. "Drink."

"I- okay."

Leo tried to avoid their gazes as he fumbled with the bottle. He sighed, before taking a swig of it. Maybe if he did everything they told him too, he could avoid-

"So, you wanna talk with us about *that*, or...?"

Damn it!

He left the bottle down a little too quickly, giving Mikey his best attempt at a reassuring smile, "Uh talk I mean heh what is there to talk about we hugged it out everything's fiiiiine-"

"If everything was fine, you'd be breathing," Donnie pointed out, dryly.

Leo cut himself off, winded from the speed in which he talked, "Ugh, okay, guilty as charged."

They all kept staring at him, expectantly.

Leo straightened up, taking a deep breath, "Just... y'know... what just happened and... all that," he tried to smile again, "it's okay though, I'm fine, comparatively."

"Okay?!"

"Fine?!"

"Comparatively...?"

Leo ignored Raph and Donnie, turning to the youngest, "Yeah I mean.. I didn't break anything, my shell's not as cracked, I'm fine," looking away, he added under his breath, "which is ironic, since it's my fault we all ended up like this, but okay-"

"Whoa whoa whoa whoa!" Raph interrupted, "pause, rewind, *what*-"

"C'mon Leo, you can't actually think-" A single look from the oldest shut Mikey up, "oh shit, you *do*."

"Ok... but literally why?"

There went Donnie again, with the obvious questions.

Leo scoffed, "It just *is*," his brothers' unimpressed looks spurred him on, "just- I'm the leader, I'm the oldest, I'm the responsible one! And I just- *lead* you straight into that fucking mess! I should've known it wasn't going to end well, but I still-!"

"Woah, hey, hold up there-" Mikey interrupted, "you're talking like we had options-"

"Yeah I mean, what were we supposed to do?" Donnie continued, "just let the dude with a god complex kill every human?"

"No! But I mean-" Leo groaned in frustration, "you guys are *not* getting it!"

"Getting what?" Raph answered in a growl, "That Mr. Leader is throwing a hissy fit over his plan not going *exactly* as planned?"

"Raph, that's not it-"

"Well it sure sounds like it-"

"*YOU ALL NEARLY DIED!*"

The room went still, echoes of Leo's shout replaying in the corners, his labored breathing seeming to just make the silence all the deeper.

Time passed, and no one made a sound.

Leo slumped, hanging his head low. "You nearly died," he repeated, "I could've lost you. It would've been my fault. I'm sorry." He shut his eyes tight, "I'm so sorry."

"Leo..." Mikey reached out, but the eldest backed away, like the contact would hurt him.

"No, it's... it's okay, it doesn't matter, we're all alive, *it doesn't matter*," Leo sounded more like he wanted to convince himself. "Anyways, it's late, let's all just... quit talking about this and go to sleep, okay?"

As if to prove the point he was making, Leo turned around and wrapped himself in his blanket, flopping to the bed and staying perfectly still.

The remaining three brothers looked at each other. With a resigned sigh, Donnie and Mikey turned around, going back to their beds.

Raph, however, was more stubborn than that.

"Woah hey hold up WHAT-" Leo's startled words had the two youngest whipping around, just in time to see his whole mattress crash to the ground, with him still on it. "Raph! What the hell?!"

Raph grinned at him, still holding onto the mattress after pulling it out the bed. "You want us to sleep? Bet, I'll only sleep if we put our beds down and do a sleepover." He turned to the other turtles, "*All* of us."

"Oh heck yeah!" Mikey shouted excitedly, "we hadn't had one of these in forever!" Giggling, he ran to the bunk beds, beginning to pull out the mattresses. Donnie ran to help him, grinning wildly.

"You couldn't just tell me so?!" Leo chastised the other, "did you have to take the bed down with me in it?!"

"Consider," Raph spread his hands wide, "it was funny."

Leo grabbed his pillow, tilting his head like he wanted to crack his neck, except no sound came, "Bitch, I'm 'boutta be hilarious."

"No wait LEO-"

While Leo and Raph were busy beating each other up with pillows, Mikey and Donnie kept arranging the room for what they had secretly decided would be their best sleepover yet. Mattress and sleeping bag were pulled out of their usual spot, then dragged to the center of the room, all the while avoiding stray pillow hits from their oldest brothers.

Finally, only the one at the top bunk remained. "Don't worry, I got this," Mikey said, confidently, before jumping, grabbing onto the sides of the mattress. Putting his feet against the ladder at his side, he began pulling, hoping for the whole thing to come crashing down.

"Uh... Mikey..."

"Don't worry, I got this!"

"But you're gonna-!"

The mattress tipped down.

"-FALL!"

Mikey yelped, suddenly realizing that maybe, this had been a bad idea.

He braced himself, ready to hit the ground, but wound up hitting a soft pair of arms instead.

"Huh?" He dared look, only to find himself staring straight into his older brother's eyes. "Oh, hey Leo."

"Wha- Don't you 'hey Leo' me! You nearly fell on your shell!" Leo reprimanded, "your *freshly cracked* shell, might I add."

Behind them, Donnie winced, "Yeah, I don't even wanna think about how bad that'll feel..." He looked over at Raph and, wordlessly, they both decided to accommodate the mattress next to the other ones while Leo chewed out Mikey.

"Yeah but, it's fine Leo, you caught me!" Mikey gave his older brother his sweetest, brightest smile, and watched as his resolve crumbled. "Uh, you also don't have to keep holding me, I mean it's nice but..."

Leo let go of Mikey, although he still gave him a hard look, "I swear, one of these days I'm gonna- I'm gonna wrap you in bubble wrap!" He threatened, weakly.

Mikey kept smiling, "That's cool, I like bubble wrap."

"Yeah, me too," Raph commented, "I bet it'll be fun to punch Mikey and hear the wrap go like…" he let go of the mattress, now along the rest of them, at the same time as he did a popping sound with his mouth.

Donnie nodded, "Yeah, I would take my bō and swing it at you like a piñata," he said, looking at Mikey with a mischievous smile.

The youngest hid behind Leo, looking at him for help. He just looked back, squinting. "Change of plans, I'm wrapping you *all* in bubble wrap," Leo declared, throwing his hands up as he walked over to the line of mattresses on the floor. Without further ado, he flopped down in one, stretching his limbs and taking as much space as possible.

"Fair enough," Raph grinned, laying down next to Leo. "Move your arm over, I wanna be comfy too."

Leo mumbled indecipherably in response.

"Oh c'mon Leo, we gotta share!" Mikey chastised this time, "It's the whole point of the sleepover!"

"Hey, why do we call this a 'sleepover'?" Donnie asked suddenly, "I mean, we share a room, isn't that like, a constant sleepover?"

"It would be, if you didn't constantly close your tent and shut yourself away from the world," Mikey answered, with no real heat behind his words.

"Hey, that reminds me, you're still out of your tent, so I'm guessing the whole 'not coming out in three weeks' thing was bullshit, huh?" Raph questioned Donnie. Before the younger one could answer, he continued, "Lying cunt."

Mikey raised a brow at him, "Man, what is it with you today and calling people lying cunts?"

Raph shrugged.

Leo groaned, finally moving and making more space for his brothers. "I'm telling dad."

"Don't you dare."

Snickering, Mikey and Donnie laid down, next to their older brothers.

A comfortable silence settled over them.

"...If it's worth anything, I'm a lying cunt, too," Raph said suddenly, causing the youngest turtles to burst out laughing.

"Jesus fucking-" Leo bit back his own bubbling laughter, "*Why* are you lying cunt, Raph?" He asked instead.

Raph shuffled, uncomfortably, "Y'know... I just... this whole time, I kept being mean to you, calling you losers and stuff, and that's... that's not true, okay? You guys... you guys are cool, and stuff, and I... care about you, okay? I..." He swallowed around the lump in his throat, "I'm sorry if I ever... made you feel like I didn't..."

Raph looked down, avoiding everyone's gazes as the silence stretched.

"That's... whoa," Leo spoke up, finally. "Where uh, where did that came from?"

Raph shrugged, "Nearly dying gives you a lot if insight, I guess-" He was cut off by his youngest brother's arms wrapping around his neck, nearly squeezing the life out of him.

"I love you too, bro," Mikey said, smushing his cheek against the top of Raph's head, "and... don't worry, I know you love us too, even if you act like an ass sometimes."

"Yeah, what he said, so chill about it," Donnie smiled, reaching out and giving Raph's hand a soft squeeze.

Raph turned a little to look at him, and in doing so, he caught sight of Leo, giving him his best reassuring smile. He cleared his throat, "yeah, whatever, cool," he pushed Mikey off, albeit a lot gentler than he usually would, "let's all just go to bed then."

"Alrighty, then..."

"Whatever you say..."

"Eepy time!"

They all settled down.

"...Damn, I think now we *all* need therapy."

"Oh my god, Mikey-"

Laughter followed, melting away all their fears and doubts into the night.

///

When the morning came, and their still-highly-concerned father peeked into the room, he found the four boys fast asleep, one next to the other in a neat row, arms slung over one another.

He smiled softly, and decided to let them sleep in. They deserved it.

End Notes

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